SPECIAL FEATURES

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Manifest Destiny of the United States in the Caribbean

BY CHARLES M. PEPPER.

THE treaty for purchase of the Danish West Indies has raised some of the old questions about manifest destiny in the Caribbean. In the Latin American countries, in the discussion of the subject, there is an undertone of inquiry. In the United States there is simply the assumption that manifest destiny will take care of itself.

The Latin American viewpoint takes into consideration both geography and political considerations. It starts with the sequel to the Spanish-American war, which was the practical protectorate over Cuba and the actual acquisition of Porto Rico by the United States.

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Few persons read current news with a map before them. For that reason many do not understand why the incorporation of the Danish West Indies should be considered as an extension of American territorial influence which will go on extending along geographical lines. They have vague notions of what constitutes the Caribbean area.

For the benefit of ungeographical readers, it may be explained that the West Indian Islands, or the Greater Antilles and Lesser Antilles, form a sort of causeway between the northern and the southern continents. It is not a very long stretch from the western end of Cuba to the northeastern point of Yucatan.

The passage is known as the Yucatan channel. It joins the waters of the Gulf of Mexico with those of the Caribbean sea.

Cuba sometimes has been described as a cornucopia. Just at present, with the abundant sugar crop and the high price obtained on account of the European war, it is a true horn of plenty, but this happy economic state has little to do with the geographic horn, with the narrow end at the Yucatan passage and the mouth at the Windward passage, where is situated the American naval station of Guantanamo.

Believers in manifest destiny think chiefly of Cuba as the base for Guantanamo, and the current discussion has not ignored the palpable circumstance that the harbor of St. Thomas is a strategic acquisition with reference to the Caribbean sea and the Panama canal.

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In the political sense the connecting link between Cuba and the American territory of Porto Rico, and prospectively of the Danish West Indies, is not American territory. The island which lies between Cuba and Porto Rico, and which comprises the two countries of Haiti and Santo Domingo, is not actually American.

But the United States Navy a few months ago, acting under orders from Washington, ended anarchy in Haiti, set up a skeleton government with which a so-called fiscal protectorate was negotiated, which is in effect also a political protectorate that makes Haiti a part of the United States.

Santo Domingo already had a fiscal treaty, but since this did not prevent constant revolutions, the navy, acting under orders from Washington, also intervened there, and is running affairs now.

The Leeward Islands continue the geographical chain until it links up with the Windward Islands, which form the curve between Porto Rico and the South American coast.

The South and Central American coast line sometimes has been called the Caribbean crescent. Politically it frequently has presented the horns of a dilemma, but the policy of the United States has been fairly consistent in the affirmation of paramount American influence from the time it discouraged the British claim to the Mosquito coast of Nicaragua, until it kindly but firmly gave both Germany and Venezula to understand that Margarita Island, off the Venezuelan coast, was not a good place for a German coaling station.

Following the acquisition of the Danish West Indies more immediate interest is likely to attach to the island chain than to the Caribbean crescent on the mainland.

The majority of the Leeward and the Windward islands, extending from the Danish group to Trinidad, are British. Antigua is little known to people in the United States, but a historic interest has made Nevis and St. Kitts known because of Alexander Hamilton.

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Martinique and Guadaloupe are the French possessions. They are governed under the French colonial system. The population which survived Mont Pele is French in tradition and association. The patois spoken by the blacks is also French. The islands themselves have no great strategic importance.

Beyond the French group stretch Santa Lucia, the Barbados, Trinidad and some lesser islands.

Manifest destiny in the Caribbean, however, is not to be determined solely with reference to the Caribbean crescent of the mainland, or the Cuban cornucopia with the extended chain of islands. There are inner islands as well.

Almost instinctively, following the news regarding the Danish treaty, a query was raised about the future of the Dutch West Indies. These lie off the coast of Venezuela. Curacoa is the leading one of these islands. It is known for other things than the cordial of that name.

The Dutch West Indies have some commercial value, but as a whole they are a losing proposition to Holland. Occasionally a question is asked whether Holland might not free herself from them by sale to the United States. The proposition has not been very seriously mooted, because the United States has never had strong reasons for purchasing the islands, but as a part of the program of eliminating the minor European powers, by their own consent, from the West Indies there is certain to be discussion as to the advisability of the United States acquiring the Dutch group.

Jamaica also lies within the island chain, isolated geographically from the other British possessions. Strategically, it has importance, both with reference to the Panama canal and to the whole Caribbean area. The British naval station at Port Royal, opposite Kingston, serves as something more than a coaling station. It is the strategic base of the British fleet.

Since the Danish treaty raises numerous questions about the future of the Caribbean it may be well to consider something else besides naval bases and guarding the Panama canal. There are questions of economic resources, of population and of political sovereignty.

Secretary Knox when at the head of the State Department caused a series of reports to be made by the American consuls on the effect of the Panama canal. The consular investigations were largely of an economic and commercial character, although they did not ignore the political considerations.

In most of the islands it was found that the increase of trade on account of the Panama canal was small. The Leeward and the Windward groups were really outside its sphere of influence, although they had some importance as way ports for the European steamship lines.

In the case of the French islands there was some national significance in the prospect of French vessels which might use the canal for the voyage to the Society Islands coaling at Guadaloupe, but it was not of very great importance. Under the French colonial system France manages to maintain a large share of the trade of the islands, yet the tendency is more and more to follow the natural geographic lines and trade with the United States.

The lesser British islands, which had good coaling facilities, thought that they might derive some advantage from the increased number of vessels which would be engaged in the Panama trade, but there was no reason to look for a material change in trade relations.

Jamaica was the exception, just as it is an exception in the strategic sense. Jamaica felt that her economic importance would be increased on account of the canal because of her geographical situation, but when it came to trade, the increased trade that was looked for was chiefly with the United States.

The economic status of Jamaica must be considered in all the future discussion of manifest destiny in the Caribbean. Practically the island is as near to the coast cities of the United States as to the other British possessions in the West Indies. Economic gravitation draws her to the United States. Political considerations impel her to the other British possessions.

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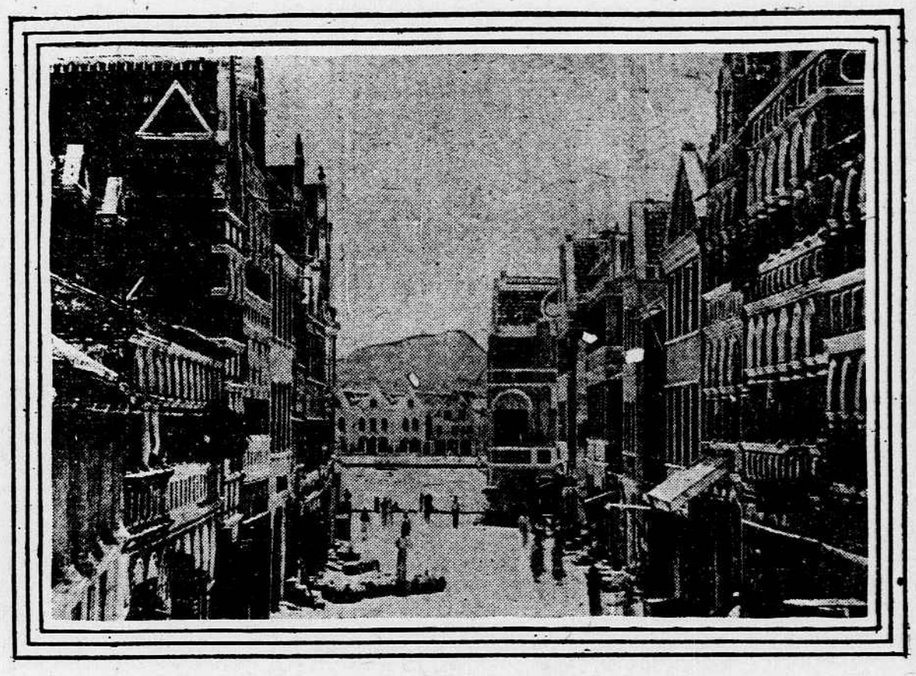
There is nothing, however, of the magnet in the attraction of the other British possessions for Jamaica. She has so little in common with them that it is difficult to develop sentiment in favor of a British West India confederation, taking in the score of British island possessions.

When her sugar industry went to ruin it was American capitalists who rehabilitated Jamaica by the development of the fruit industry. Notwithstanding the efforts of the British steamship lines and the British government, the United States is still the best market for Jamaican products and will continue to be the best market.

In the past, at times when trade was bad and production limited because of the lack of a market, Jamaica has talked annexation to the United States. The talk usually died out because no encouragement was given it in this country. But notwithstanding the presence of an ultra-loyal British element, Jamaica usually was discontented with being a British possession, and said so. Sometimes her discontent took the form of criticism of the governor named by the British government.

Since the beginning of the great war Jamaica has shown herself fully as loyal as other British possessions, and has contributed her full quota of volunteers, most of them blacks. But when the war is over the economic situation again will become the factor that must be taken into consideration in determining her future.

HARBOR FRONT AT KINGSTON, JAMAICA.



A STREET IN CURACOA, DUTCH WEST INDIES.

The Rambler Writes of Bryans Point on the Potomac

BRYANS point, on the Maryland shore of the Potomac between Piscataway and Mattawoman creeks, has certain claims to consideration in a historic sense. It is about two miles below or southwest of Fort Washington, for the Potomac after flowing due south from Washington city makes a sharp westward turn at the old fort.

Bryans point is not as sharp and distinct as "points" on the Potomac river generally are, but there a rounded shore projects a short distance beyond the shore line on the east and the west.

The main roads from the District of Columbia leading to the numerous towns and villages on the Potomac side of the southern Maryland peninsula do not pass within three or four miles of Bryans point, and the steamboats on which most Washingtonians travel, when they do travel on the Potomac river, do not stop at this interesting old place, so that, although Bryans point is only twelve miles from Washington, few of the city's people ramble that way.

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Along the south side of Piscataway creek and along the Potomac river southwest of the mouth of that creek there is an irregular border of low land with an average width of about half a mile. At this time it is green with growing crops. On this margin of land the geologists say that it is the Talbot formation of the Columbia group of pleistocene age—"clayey loam occupying the upper portion of the formation, carrying gravel layers and scattered boulders, the lower half composed usually of clay, sand, gravel and boulders."

From this flat land a lofty and wooded ridge rises, broken by a great number of ravines, down which small streams gush, and these streams, after rushing from the highland, wander sluggishly over the flat land until they pour themselves into the big river.

This ridge is of eocene age, and the geologists have named the formations which are mingled there "Nanjemoy" and "Aquia," or the Pamonkey group, the Nanjemoy being distinguished by clay, sandy clay, sand, glauconite and marl, and the Aquia by greensand, sand and indurated sand.

As one passes down the river it is not long after leaving behind the wooded bluff, rising sheer from the pebbly shore and on which Fort Foote stood, that River View comes into the picture. The abandoned and ruinous pavilion and dining room are now familiar objects to river travelers. Young trees and wild shrubbery have grown up along the steep roadway which was cut from the landing to the top of the hill.

Before being given the name of River View this was Hattons point, so called after one of the very old and honorable families of Maryland, whose property this was. On the south side of this point there enters the Potomac a small stream with a wide mouth, which many generations ago was variously called Hattons creek and Swan creek, but which is laid down on the maps today as Swan creek.

This is a reminder of the time when wild swans were plentiful in this locality, a fact which is recalled by the name of more than one stream, for into the Potomac river near Leesburg, Va., flows an important creek which the Indians called by a name equivalent to "River of Swans," but which the early white settlers translated into "Goose creek."

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Across the mouth of Swan creek are the gray walls of Fort Washington, and on the high level land to which green slopes lead, are rows of new detached brick buildings. Then one crosses the mouth of Piscataway creek, nearly, if not quite, a mile wide. The water though broad is shoal, but in the times of which the Rambler so often writes sailing craft navigated that stream to the wharves of the village of Piscataway, five miles inland, and bore cargoes of tobacco and wheat to Europe.

Two miles up the creek is the hamlet of Farmington, and middle-aged Washingtonians remember the little steamboats Fairy and Virginia of the Piscataway line, which ran between Alexandria and Farmington. Only an occasional motor boat disturbs the calm of that creek today.

On the south side of Piscataway creek where it joins the Potomac is Mockleys point, a name that carries the mind back to one of the old settlers in that neighborhood. From this point one's eye may follow the Maryland shore to the wharf at Marshall Hall.

From the river the shoreline appears to be straight, but follow that shore afoot and it is a line that weaves in and out, there being numerous points and bays too inconspicuous to be called such on the maps, yet of stupendous importance to a man who trudges along the shore and who walks two miles to gain one mile.

Much of this stretch of shore was Bryans fishing shore and which is now under lease to the United States. Along this shore is a bank from three or four feet high to twenty. For most of the way it is a low bank and here and there the green fields seem to slope gently to the tawney sand and gravel shore. For long stretches the bank shines yellow in the summer sun, but there are also long stretches that are veiled under a mask of green wild shrubbery. Near the shore are several brightly painted new houses and barns and then some old houses and warped and weathered barns. The slopes of the ridge are green-clothed with trees which screen many old homes, but here and there an old house stands in a patch of cleared land and stares boldly at you.

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At Bryans point a United States fish hatchery was established in 1892, it having been removed in that year from Fort Washington, where it was established in 1880. This hatchery has contributed, and will continue to contribute, its share to the important work of restoring and conserving the fisheries of the United States, and last spring, as a result of the operation of this hatchery, there were liberated in the Potomac river 65,815,000 shad and 152,355,000 yellow perch.

To the Rambler it has long seemed prudent and appropriate that the government select this site on the Potomac for a fish hatchery, for in those days when men fished recklessly and without thought for the future, when they looked on fish as inexhaustible, and long before the fish commission or the bureau of fisheries entered upon the work of replenishing the fish supply and educating the people against wanton waste of their cheapest and greatest source of animal food, Bryans point, or Bryans fishing shore, was one of the great fisheries of the Potomac river.

The man after whom Bryan's point is named was William Bryan, whose big frame house, with heavy outside brick chimneys, was called Bryan Hall. He is buried in the holy acre of St. Mary's Catholic Church at Piscataway and his tombstone is inscribed: "William Bryan of Richard, born 9th December, 1787, died 18th June, 1853."

Close to this tomb is another which is inscribed "Richard H. Bryan, born 7th March, 1827, died July 1st, 1853." These were father and son and they died of cholera, 1853 being one of the "cholera years" in Washington and its neighboring country. Buried in this lot is the widow of William Bryan of Richard, who lived to a great age and died some time in 1895. Her maiden name was Susannah Lanham.

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William Bryan bought a number of large farms and also bought this fishing shore, probably from the Marshll family. He had a large family. The first son was Richard. The second was Pliny, who at the outbreak of the civil war entered the Confederate service, rose to a position on the staff of Gen. Beauregard and died of yellow fever at the close of the war, the Rambler believes at Charleston, or it may have been Savannah.

In going through the records of the Old Capitol Prison, at Washington, the Rambler recently came upon the name of Pliny Bryan. He was a prisoner there in 1862 and the entry opposite his name is "Spy, Rebel Signal Service." There is also an entry of the name William Page Bryan, a younger brother of Pliny, who was registered as a "prisoner of state, without doubt in the rebel intelligence service."

In spite of the grave charges against these men they were freed, for, as already stated, Pliny had a somewhat distinguished career till the close of the war, and William Page Bryan died five or six years ago at Providence Hospital, Washington, and is buried in the lot at St. Mary's Church, Piscataway.

The third child of William Bryan and Susannah Lanham was Eleanor, who married Walter P. Griffin, and they are buried in the churchyard of St. John's Catholic Church at Surrattsville. They have numerous grandchildren, one of whom is Representative Mudd of the fifth Maryland district.

The fourth child of William and Susannah Bryan, was James Ford Sothoron Bryan, who married Miss Francis Barry, the daughter of David Barry, who owned that large tract on the Eastern branch called St. Elizabeth, on which the Government Hospital for the Insane was established, and on which a number of settlements have grown on what is carried in the plat book of the District, as "Barry Farm."

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William Page Bryan married Miss Virginia Scott of Washington, daughter of Thomas A. Scott of Washington. They lived at Bryan Hall for many years, but, with the exception of one daughter, their children are living in Washington. The sixth child of William and Susannah Bryan was Robert Bryan, who went off to the war in 1861, and served until Appomattox in the 1st Maryland Battery, generally known, after its second commanding officer, as Dement's Battery.

After Appomattox Robert came back to Maryland for a short time, and then went into the far west, prospecting and mining, for years. Some time in the late eighties he returned to Maryland for a visit, returned west, and died at Colfax, Cal. Sempronia was the seventh child, and she married Raphael Semmes of Washington. They have children and grandchildren living in Washington.

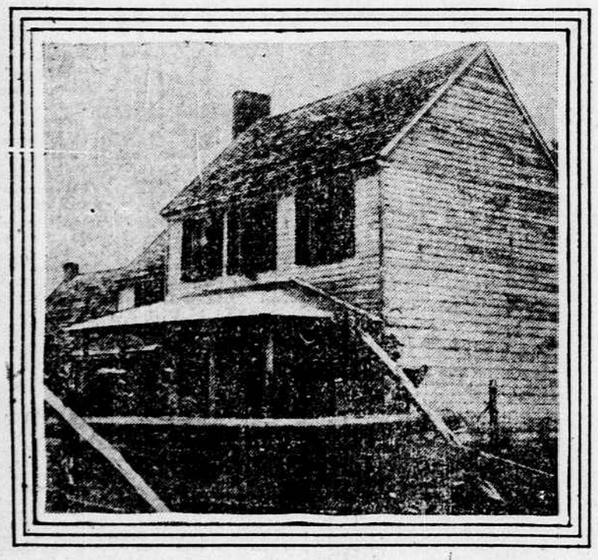
The eighth and last child was Bayne Bryan, who married a Miss Hunter of Prince Georges county. He became a prosperous business man in Buffalo, and recently retired from active work. He has several sons and daughters, all of them well situated in life.

The farm of about 300 acres, adjoining the Bryan's point fishing shore fell to the lot of James Ford Sothoron Bryan, who was known to everybody in that part of Maryland as "Suddy" Bryan. Probably his parents intended that he should be called Sothoron, but perhaps some childish lisping tongue could not pronounce that, and hit upon what sounded to their elders like "Suddy." He was "Suddy" to his friends throughout his life.

One of the sons of James Ford Sothoron Bryan and Frances Barry is Arthur B. Bryan, who married Miss Elizabeth Clements of Charles county. They have two children. Arthur owns and lives in the old "Suddy" Bryan homestead, works the old farm, and is the custodian of the fish hatchery.

Other children of "Suddy" Bryan are James S. Bryan of Washington, Blanch Bryan, a Sister of Charity, and Susie, who married Percy Clements and lives in Washington. Another child, Mary Eva Bryan, married Richard Bryan, a distant relative, and lives on some of the old Bryan estate between the fishing shore and Marshall Hall.

ARTHUR BRYAN, CUSTODIAN OF FISH HATCHING AT BRYANS POINT.



BRYAN HOMESTEAD AT BRYANS POINT.

SPECIALISTS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

ONE sees from time to time in the daily newspapers a notice to the effect that an examination will be held by the civil service commission for such a highly technical position as chief statistician for vital statistics, or of an explosive chemist, or assistant epidemiologist, a leather chemist or a master steel maker. And one occasionally pauses long enough in the casual reading to wonder how the civil service commission, with all its experience in getting at the best of the gray matter of poor humanity in its task of filling all grades and kinds of positions under the government, meets this phase of its work.

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Does it strike a snag when it is called upon to prepare for the examination of a mineral technologist for the bureau of mines, or rate the papers of a physical metallurgist for the Navy Department, or a senior draining engineer for the Department of Agriculture? Or does it "fly up in the air" upon being asked by the War Department to provide it with an aeronautical engineer?

Not a bit of it. The United States government is not often caught napping, and that guardian of the efficiency of its service, the civil service commission, has never yet lost its power or poise, no matter how difficult the position it has been called upon to fill, and no matter how many new and highly technical posts the expansion of the government, with the growth of its scientific bureaus, has opened. The times are rare when the civil service commission has not been able to find the right man for the place seeking him.

One of the latest requirements submitted to the commission in the way of a specialist was for a man to fill the position of valuation analyst for the interstate commerce commission, the salary offered being $5,000. Some of the duties of this highly technical post is to compile data and to prepare complete, concise, logical reports upon valuation subjects, and to analyze, edit and digest reports submitted by sections of the division of valuation. From the civil service examination it was desired to secure eligibles with special qualifications for this work in connection with the valuation of common carriers.

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What has the civil service done to equip itself to provide for this great and growing band of specialists which an expanding government and the exigencies of the time have necessitated to carry on the work of the departments? The government's business is as broad as human endeavor, the commission being called upon to hold more than four hundred different kinds of examinations a year to meet its needs.

For a special examination of experts called for by the government, and whose salaries range from about $2,500 upward, the civil service commission does not call for the usual assembled examination of candidates as for the ordinary appointments for the service. It makes its announcements of the positions to be filled, and candidates for examination respond. The non-assembled examination consists of a thorough investigation of the experience, training, education and fitness of all the applicants, sometimes combined with a consideration of a thesis or their published works, and the composite rating upon all these elements by examiners trained in the weighing and averaging of qualifications, usually assisted by an expert in the kind of work or field knowledge with which the prospective appointee will be required to deal.

The rating is gauged by the tests of education, experience, reports and writing submitted. An expert to fill the position of valuation analyst for the interstate commerce commission, for instance, was rated on the following subjects, which had the relative weights indicated: Education, 30; experience, 30; reports and writings, 40.

These individual examinations are invariably supplemented by confidential inquiries into the applicants' career, and these inquiries are regarded as a recognized and accredited part of the examination of a candidate for special work under the government.

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How has the civil service commission met the government's requirements for the examination of specialists for the new positions opening almost weekly to the public?

The examining division of the civil service commission is in itself a corps of experts skilled by years of experience in the preparation of examination papers, and in their rating. In the case of the technical examination of experts, however, they do not rely altogether upon their own knowledge of the requirements for positions of importance under the government. To further their efficiency in the examination of specialists they have a corps of experts whose technical knowledge is brought to bear upon the examining of specialists.

To supplement this corps of experts there is a subsidiary force which may be called upon at will. This consists of a group of men outside of the service of the government who have attained to positions of eminence upon special subjects. Many of these outside specialists are university professors in the chief institutions of learning throughout the country, while others are men who have achieved recognized success in scientific professions.

This corps of chosen specialists, numbering perhaps half a hundred, are known as expert examiners. The subjects of which they are master embrace a wide field and include among many other branches civil, hydro-electric, structural, chemical, mechanical, highway, mining and sanitary engineering, agronomy, bacteriology, chemistry, including chemical engineering, dairy chemistry, chemistry of explosives, of petroleum, of forest products, etc.; entomology, railway accounting, paper making, quarry technology, radio-activity, etc.

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To retain this class of special examiners for the value of their assistance in rating the work of experts Congress has granted a small appropriation for the use of the commission in paying these expert examiners. The compensation for this work is merely nominal. However, these authorities and experts have given generously of their time and abilities in serving the government in their expert capacities. They seem to welcome the opportunity to render a public service by helping to obtain for the federal service the best men available for its scientific and technical work.

It is believed to be a fair statement that the government receives greater value in return for the amount expended for expert examiners than for almost any other item of expense under the head of personal service.

A prominent official of the civil service commission, in referring to the fee paid the special examiners, said that it reminded him somewhat of an incident which occurred in the departmental service some time ago, when a certain rich young man, who had secured a position in a scientific bureau because of his interest in a certain line of work, upon being reminded of pay day, remarked, "I forgot there was a salary."

"The examinations along special lines for government service are receiving the attention of highly qualified applicants more and more each year," said Mr. H. A. Hesse, chief of the examining division of the civil service commission. "Work for the government makes a romantic appeal to many men of high grade, and our corps of government experts makes an eminently distinguished group.

"While the force of experts employed as special examiners has inspired the confidence of the public and of intending applicants, the commission is wholly responsible for the character of the examinations and for the correctness of the ratings. The examiners in this office are trained in the essentially judicial function of weighing the evidence of qualifications, and no one can judge of general averages as fairly as they can. In this respect this division assumes full responsibility for all the examining work coming under the jurisdiction of the civil service commission."

MR. H. A. HESSE,
Chief of examining division, civil service commission.

The Penalty.

THE late Mrs. Hetty Green, though worth $150,000,000, was against votes for women.

At a luncheon in Bellows Falls a suffragette once shouted:

"Think of it, Mrs. Green! The keeper of every low boozing ken has a vote and I haven't!"

"Yes, but," said Mrs. Green, "the keeper of the boozing ken has to shut up every night at midnight."